

FTB 5 1962 Pde 200-2
2000004114 CIA-RDP75-0021890200190011-1
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Humiliation at Punta del Este

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

SENATOR STEVEN B. DEROUNIAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 5, 1962

Mr. Speaker, the
Nixon Avenue boys around the White
House are trying to tell the people of the
United States what a great victory was
achieved at Punta del Este. I happen to
agree with the conclusion reached by
Newsday, the largest daily in my congres-
sional district, which thinks that the Na-
tion was humiliated. Coming, editorial-
ly, from a paper that generally supports
the Kennedy administration adds
strength to the views expressed on Feb-
ruary 1:

PYRRHIC VICTORY

"Another such victory, and we are un-
done." (Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, referring
to his dearly bought victory at Asculum, 280
B.C.)

The wisdom of the ancients never loses its
timeliness, as our victory at Punta del Este
amply demonstrates. We indeed succeeded
in ousting Cuba from the Organization of
American States—by one vote. The original
proposal of Secretary of State Rusk, that
the Americans impose economic sanctions on
Cuba, sank without a trace. It was, in the
words of Little Peterkin, "a famous victory."

Look who helped us: Guatemala, El Salva-
dor, Panama, among other small countries.
The only significant votes for our side came
from Venezuela and Uruguay. We enlisted
almost all the little nations, but none of the
really big ones. The vitally important and
influential A-S-C states (Argentina, Brazil,
Chile) abstained. So did Mexico, our next-
door and presumably good neighbor. These
larger countries don't like Fidel Castro, but
they are usually aware of dangerous ultra
leftwing movements at home. Governments
might have been overthrown had they gone
along.

Thus, to the humiliation of the Cuban
invasion, indeed, we have now piled a diplo-
matic defeat. We have not saved face by
bringing about the ouster of Cuba. We have
lost face. For if, in its own hemisphere, the
United States cannot enforce its will, the
rest of the world is bound to pay less at-
tention to us.

This disaster could have been averted. If
months in advance, the Latin American na-
tions had been polled carefully, we might
have had time to persuade at least more of
them. Or to abandon the idea of a confer-
ence until such time as we could be sure
of success. Open diplomacy may be great in
theory, but in fact there is no substitute for
secret diplomacy as its forerunner. A great
conference of nations, called to peralize a
policy, makes no sense unless the policy
is assured in advance.

The first lesson this country can learn
from Punta del Este is that something obvi-
ously is wrong with our Latin American in-
terests, and that Latin American experts
in the State Department lack judgment. The
country must never again to expose ourselves to
such humiliation—needless humiliation, to
put it best.

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